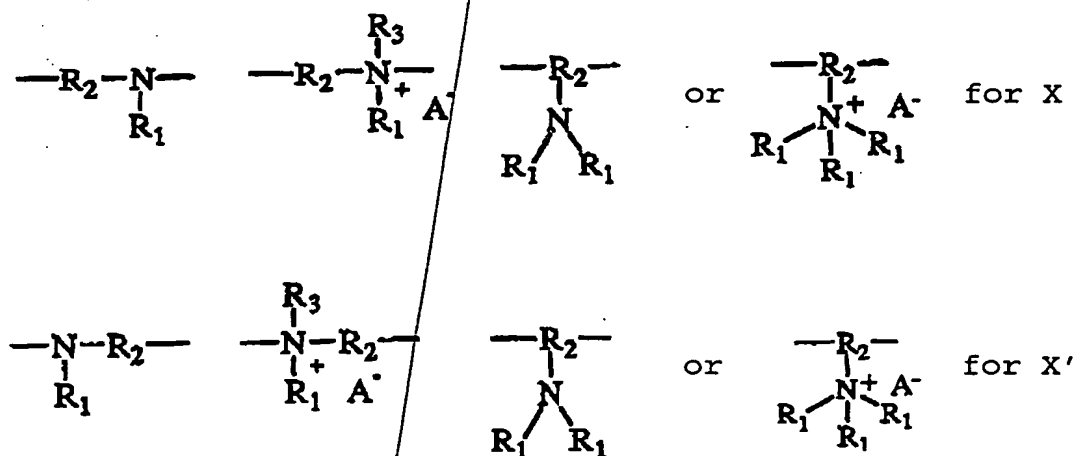


4. (Amended) A polyurethane according to Claim 1, wherein R and R' both independently represent a hydrophobic group, X and X' each represent an L>> group, n and p have the value 0 and L, L', L>>, Y and m have the meaning indicated in Claim 1.
5. (Amended) A polyurethane according to Claim 1, wherein R and R' both independently represent a hydrophobic group, X and X' both independently represent a group comprising a quaternary amine, n and p have the value 0 and L, L', Y and m have the meaning indicated in Claim 1.
6. (Amended) A polyurethane according to Claim 1, which exhibits a number-average molecular mass between 400 and 500 000.
7. (Amended) A polyurethane according to Claim 1, wherein R and R' represent a radical or a polymer with a saturated or unsaturated and linear or branched hydrocarbonaceous chain, in which chain one or more of the carbon atoms is optionally replaced by a heteroatom selected from the group consisting of S, N, O and P, or a radical comprising a silicone or perfluorinated chain.
8. (Amended) A polyurethane according to Claim 1, wherein X and X' represent one of the formulae:



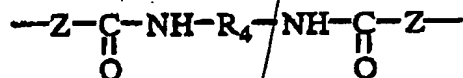
in which:

R₂ represents a linear or branched alkylene radical having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms, which optionally may comprise a saturated or unsaturated ring, or an arylene radical, wherein one or more carbon atoms optionally is replaced by a heteroatom selected from the group consisting of N, S, O or P;

R₁ and R₃, which are identical or different, are a linear or branched C₁-C₃₀ alkyl or alkenyl radical or an aryl radical, wherein at least one of the carbon atoms optionally can be replaced by a heteroatom selected from the group consisting of N, S, O and P;

A⁻ is a physiologically acceptable counterion.

9. (Amended) A polyurethane according to Claim 1, wherein L, L' and L>> groups, which are identical or different, represent the formula:

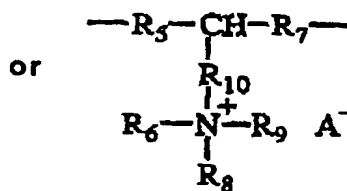
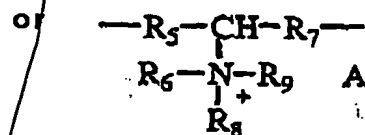
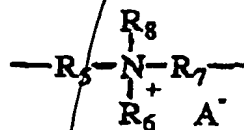
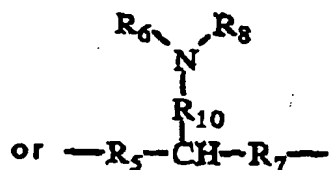
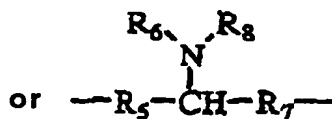
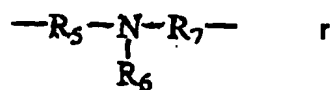


in which:

Z represents -O-, -S- or -NH-; and

R₄ represents a linear or branched alkylene radical having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms, which optionally may comprise a saturated or unsaturated ring, or an arylene radical, wherein one or more of the carbon atoms optionally is replaced by a heteroatom chosen from N, S, O and P.

10. (Amended) A polyurethane according to Claim 7, wherein said P and P' groups, which are identical or different, are selected from the following formulae:



R₅ and R₇ have the same meanings as R₂ defined in Claim 7;

R₆, R₈ and R₉ have the same meanings as R₁ and R₃ defined in Claim 7;

R₁₀ represents a linear or branched alkylene group which is optionally unsaturated and which optionally comprises one or more heteroatoms selected from the group consisting of N, O, S and P, and

A⁻ is a physiologically acceptable counterion.

11. (Amended) A polyurethane according to Claim 1, wherein Y represents a glycol selected from the group consisting of ethylene glycol, diethylene glycol and propylene glycol or a group derived from a polymer selected from the group consisting of polyethers, sulphonated polyesters and sulphonated polyamides.
12. (Amended) A method of using a polyurethane as defined in Claim 1 as a thickener or gelling agent comprising adding said polyurethane to a composition which is to be used for topical application as a cosmetic.
13. (Amended) A cosmetic composition comprising, in a cosmetically acceptable medium, at least one polyurethane as defined by Claim 1.